

DASH To Lower Blood Pressure

An eating pattern known as DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) has been proven to lower blood pressure. The DASH way of eating helps you choose foods that give you minerals and other nutrients shown to help control high blood pressure.

The DASH way of eating is:

- Rich in fruits and vegetables
- Plentiful in lowfat dairy foods
- Low in fat and cholesterol
- Rich in high fiber foods
- Moderate in fish, poultry, beef and pork

Other DASH ways: lose weight if overweight, become physically active, choose foods lower in salt and sodium, limit alcohol intake, and take prescribed medicines.

How do I make the DASH to eating this way?

It's easy. Here are some ways to get started.

Change gradually to meals with more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains:

- Add an extra serving of vegetables at lunch and dinner.
- Have fruit juice at breakfast and have fruit for snacks.
- Choose whole grain bread and cereal.

Make meat a small part of the meal instead of the main dish:

- Buy less meat. Limit meat to 6 ounces a day. (3 oz. is the size of a deck of cards.)
- Have 2 or more vegetarian style (meatless) meals a week.
- Try casseroles and stir-fry dishes having less meat and more vegetables, grains and dried beans/peas.

Sample Meal Plan for Eating the DASH Way

Breakfast

Orange juice (3/4 cup)
Whole wheat toast (1 slice) with peanut butter (1 tsp.)
Oatmeal (1/2 cup) made with raisins (1/3 cup) and fat-free milk (1 cup)

Lunch

Turkey sandwich: turkey breast (2 oz.); lettuce, light mayonnaise (1 Tbsp.); whole wheat bread (2 slices)
Carrots (7 sticks) and tomato (2 slices)
Apple (1 medium)
Cranberry juice cocktail (1/2 cup)

Dinner

Baked fish (3 oz.)
Brown rice (1 cup)
Zucchini, cooked (1/2 cup)
Kidney bean salad (1/2 cup); lowfat dressing (1 Tbsp.)
Corn muffin (1 medium); lowfat spread (1 tsp.)
Fat-free milk (1 cup)

Snacks

Mixed nuts (1/4 cup)
Raw vegetables (1 cup) with low-fat dip (2 Tbsp.)
Yogurt, lowfat (1/2 cup) with strawberries (1/2 cup)

I am ready to try eating the DASH way by eating:

- _____ Plenty of fruit and vegetables
- _____ Lowfat dairy foods and drinking fat-free or lowfat milk (try lactose-free milk if milk gives you stomach aches, gas or diarrhea)
- _____ More cooked dried beans/peas, seeds, or nuts

For more on the DASH way of eating, visit:

<http://dash.bwh.harvard.edu/> or call 1-800-575-WELL.

Have your blood pressure checked regularly and talk to your health care provider about your dietary changes.

The National Institutes of Health supported the study that lead to developing the DASH eating plan.